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ABSTRACT

Using a naturalistic inquiry approach, a study examined the application of whole class instruction as an alternative instructional strategy to ability grouping in first grade reading instruction. Subjects, 57 first-grade students in two classrooms attending an elementary school in a middle-class section of Orem, Utah, used the Companion Reading Program, which specifies whole class instruction, during the 1987-1988 academic year. In addition, teachers also used peer tutoring, individual seat work exercises, silent reading, and mastery checking. Classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis constituted the data collection procedures. Results indicated that in the context, setting, and time of the case study, whole class instruction was a viable alternative to ability grouping. The teachers involved felt that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages in using this instructional strategy. (Thirty-two references and an appendix of field notes are attached.) (RS)

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A Naturalistic Study on Whole Class Instruction in First Grade Reading

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A Naturalistic Study on Whole Class Instruction in First Grade Reading

Reading is a skill that impacts on many facets of a person's life. The following are some of the most obvious examples.

- Reading ability impacts on a person's total school experience more than any other ability. It is truly the cornerstone of a student's success in school.
- A person's self-esteem can be impaired as a result of limited reading ability.
- Reading ability is essential to every day functions. As Harris and Sipay (1980) explain, "Understanding newspaper want ads requires a sixth to seventh grade level of reading ability. Directions for preparing a TV dinner are written at the eighth grade level, for taking an aspirin at the tenth grade level, and for completing a 'simplified' income tax form above the twelfth grade level. Those who cannot read street signs or notices of sales in supermarkets are at a disadvantage. Moreover, illiterates are in constant fear of having their lack of ability discovered."
- Advances in technology have resulted in more and more occupations that require specialized training that is only possible if a person is a competent reader. It is becoming extremely difficult for people who are unskilled or semi-skilled to compete in the job market.
- The need for reading competence has implications for entertainment as well as education. Of all of the forms of communication, reading is by far the most flexible. When people are competent readers they can choose what, when, and where they read. In contrast, lectures, television, radio, and films allow only a limited amount of choice.

More than ever before a person needs to be a competent reader. We are living in a technological-information age that impacts on education, science, business, industry, and most other professions. In order for people to fully participate in our current society, they have to be literate. Because of the nature of technological information, higher and higher levels of literacy will be required in the future. Historical research reveals a steady increase in the standard of literacy required to cope with our changing society. Some experts believe that the level of literacy that has been satisfactory in the past will probably be marginal by the year 2000 (Resnick & Resnick, 1977).

Historically, America has been committed to educating the masses. Consequently, every state has school attendance laws. In spite of the school attendance laws, illiteracy in America is alarmingly high. In 1977 it was found that approximately 13 percent of all of

the 17 year olds were functionally illiterate (Education Cómmission of the States, 1977). It is now a foregone conclusion that attendance at school for a prescribed number of years does not ensure reading competency.

In addition to those who graduate from high school who are functionally illiterate, there are many more who have never learned to read well enough to really enjoy reading. Consequently, they do very little reading; and when they are required to read, it is with some difficulty. The utility of reading is very limited if someone is not able to read fluently with fairly high comprehension. Most experts agree that if reading tests were administered requiring 17 year old students to apply their reading skills to "real world" problems, the percent that would be classified as being functionally illiterate would be much higher than 13 percent.

Most parents would be alarmed if they were aware of the results of a survey in which the reading ability of American students was compared with that of 14 other countries. American students never ranked first or second on any of the tests. On most tests they ranked at or below the international average (Thorndike, 1973). In a more recent comparison between the United States, Taiwan, and Japan, disproportionate numbers of American students were found to be among the poorest readers in the three countries (Stevenson, 1984).

In a survey conducted by Carroll and Chall (1975) on the status of reading in the United States for the National Academy of Education, the following recommendation was made: "Our national policy is that every child be expected to complete at least the twelfth grade. We ought then to expect every child to attain twelfth grade literacy . . . the simplest, and to us, the most persuasive argument for literacy is that an individual cannot participate in our modern society unless he can read and by this we mean reading at a rather high level of literacy."

Given the importance of reading, it is imperative that beginning readers have a successful experience when they are first learning to read in their early school years. One of the most pressing questions associated with reading is, "What determines whether or not students learn to read well?" In that most reading instruction occurs at the elementary level, this question needs to be asked in terms of younger students. Young students are much more dependent on the teacher to learn than older students. The role of attitude and motivation in learning becomes much more paramount as students get older. In that young children are generally submissive in a school setting and substantially dependent on teachers to learn, it can be concluded that two of the most probable explanations for reading failure are: (a) many students are not capable of learning to read well, and (b) much of the instruction used to teach reading is not effective

Prevailing beliefs about the limitations of poor students have influenced the way schools are organized and administered. For example, most curricula are developed on the assumption that some students are not capable of learning certain content. Virtually all elementary school reading programs are designed on the assumption that some students are going to be poor readers.

During the early 1960's, research started to suggest that assumptions about "poor" students were inaccurate. It was found that most students are capable of learning any content--it just takes them longer than others (Rosenshine & Berliner, 1977). It was demonstrated in both educational laboratories as well as schools that large portions of slower students have much greater capacity to learn than previously assumed. It was found that low students were able to learn equally complex and abstract ideas and could apply what they had learned to new problems. Even though it takes them longer to learn, slow students retain what they learn as well as other students. When slow students succeed in learning, their attitudes toward school are just as positive as the attitude of faster students.

More recent research is now suggesting that if "poor" students consistently receive good instruction, their rate of learning is much more comparable with "good" students than researchers originally thought. Early research was suggesting that it would take poor students three to five times as long to learn something as it would take good students. Research is now showing that if steps are taken to ensure that students receive good instruction, the learning rate of slower students is much faster than had been assumed previously. Most significantly, research has shown that if slower students consistently receive good instruction their rate of learning improves (Bloom, 1974). In contrast, if slower students receive poor instruction, their learning ability and learning rate regress.

There are relatively few students who do not have the mental ability necessary to learn to read. Robeck and Wilson (1974) estimate that only about one-half of one percent are so retarded mentally that they cannot learn to read. However, as a result of poor instruction many potential readers fail to learn to read because of emotional barriers that are the result of repeated failure and other negative experiences associated with reading.

When educational research is reviewed in total, it appears that instruction, not student ability, is the prime determinant of reading success. Good instruction can change students' views of themselves, enhancing their motivation to learn and increasing the amount they learn.

In light of the importance of effective beginning reading instruction, the critical question is, "Do beginning readers receive effective reading instruction?"

Most elementary teachers rely on basal reading programs as their primary medium of reading instruction, not methodologies and techniques acquired at a college or university.

In studies that have examined what instructional materials are used in classrooms, it has been reported that basal reading programs account for from 75 to 90 percent of what goes on during reading periods in elementary school rooms (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985). Less experienced teachers especially rely on the instructional strategies prescribed by a basal reading program. Consequently, the quality of reading instruction in a school setting is determined to a great extent by the teacher's guide or the manual that accompanies a basal reading series. Not only do basal reading programs have a strong influence on how students are taught to read, but they also dictate substantially what is read.

Research has shown that reading failure is fairly constant no matter what basal reading series is used by the teacher (Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Dykstra, 1968). According to May (1968), no research has been done to compare the effectiveness of one basal sequence to another. In most instances, the only scrutiny a basal reading series receives is at the time of adoption. Careful evaluation of a basal reading program usually does not continue after it has been implemented in a district.

Probably the most serious indictment of basal reading programs is the fact that experienced teachers deviate substantially from the procedures prescribed by a basal program (Durkin, 1978). This finding suggests that after teachers have used a basal series for some time, they conclude basal programs are not adequate in many respects.

In light of the fact that there is virtually no research data to support the idea that teachers can rely on a basal reading program to effectively teach reading, the trust educators place in basal reading programs is surprising.

As a result of instructional procedures advocated by most basal reading series, virtually all primary-grade teachers and many middle-grade teachers divide the children in a class into groups, most often three groups of high, average and low ability. Consequently, when students receive reading instruction, it usually takes place with a group of students who the teacher assumes has similar ability.

This form of classroom organization arose from the desire to individualize instruction. Because it is impossible for one teacher with thirty children to accommodate each child on a one to one basis, the notion of creating teaching units made up of children with seemingly similar needs was adopted as a logical alternative. In theory, ability grouping allowed teachers to adapt methods and materials more closely to the needs in the class by forming three or four units that could be treated as if each were one child at a particular reading level and with particular reading needs. The expected result was an overall increase in achievement as each pupil should then receive instruction tied more closely to their particular needs. Furthermore, this increase in achievement would be obtained without

the need to employ more teachers since the increase in work resulting from the need to adapt materials and methods for several groups could now be borne by each class teacher.

In practice, the adaptation of materials was often done by companies only too glad to fill the need, and several publishing empires were founded on the strength of stratified grouping in schools. Reading proved an especially profitable area for these companies. Instead of one book for each grade, there was now a market for hundreds of books. Teachers, daunted by the responsibility of devising multiple levels of instruction, welcomed their help, their advice, their usurpation of the curriculum. And with what result?

Research shows that grouping by ability does not lead to overall gains in student achievement. Yes, slight gains are made by the high-ability groups. But these gains are more than offset by the losses made by the average and low-ability groups (e.g. see Purdom, 1929; Miller & Otto, 1932; Ekstrom, 1961; Goldberg, Passow, & Justman, 1966; National Education Association, 1968; Findley & Bryan, 1970; Abadizi, 1984; Slavin, 1987). In fact, a major review of the research literature completely stripped homogeneous grouping of its claim to enhance achievement when it concluded that, "The longer the intervention, the more recent the study, and the better the research methods, the less evidence there was that students learned more when grouped by ability" (Kulik & Kulik, 1982).

What happens when children are grouped by ability? Plainly, there are differences in the achievement of students in high and low ability groups. What accounts for it? Some children are undoubtedly better endowed with those attributes that contribute to academic success -- be it a supportive home, intelligence, or whatever. But when children are categorized for teaching many other forces come into play which affect achievement. For example, several things happen to children who are placed in a low ability group, despite the conscious efforts of a hard-working teacher.

- They receive fewer learning opportunities (Sorensen & Hallinan, 1986).
- They receive less empathy and praise than the children in higher groups (Frieberg, 1970).
- They receive less teacher time than their more able peers (Adams & Cohen, 1974).
- Their teacher expects less of them (Cazden, 1979).
- They start to expect less of themselves (Cazden, 1979).
- Their group peers are more inattentive as a group than as individuals, and this will exaggerate any tendency to inattentiveness they might have already had (Felmlee & Eder, 1983).

- Their teacher reinforces any disruptive behavior in the group by (a) expecting less good behavior (McDermott, 1976), and (b) joining in the disruptive behavior to some extent (Eder, 1981).
- Their self-concept becomes depressed (Findley & Bryan, 1970; Eposito, 1973).
- Their attitude toward school is impaired (Eposito, 1973).

In the report *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading* (Anderson et al., 1985), the following disadvantages of homogeneous grouping were cited:

1. Whatever cute names may be given to a reading group, students are aware of the make-up of each group.
2. Low grouped students view themselves as poor readers.
3. Teachers have a tendency to view students assigned to low groups as poor readers and have lower expectations for their progress.
4. Students in low groups do less silent reading.
5. Teachers ask simpler factual questions of students in low groups and fewer questions that require reasoning.
6. Teachers tolerate more misbehavior in low groups.
7. It is difficult for a student to move from one group to another during the year.
8. Students in low groups tend to stay in low groups from one year to another. "Once a bluebird, always a bluebird."

In actuality, research evidence does not support the assumed advantages of ability grouping. As a result of the serious problems associated with homogeneous grouping, "the Commission [on Reading] believes that educators should explore other options for reading instruction. This seems to be feasible for aspects of phonics, spelling, study skills, and comprehension. There are programs that recommend whole class teaching some of the time, and they achieve good results, but whether the results are attributable to the use of whole class instruction or other features of the programs is not known" (Anderson et al., 1985).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the application of whole class instruction as an alternative instructional strategy to ability grouping in first grade reading instruction. A naturalistic inquiry approach was used because the main purpose of the study was to gain understanding on the issues and concerns of using whole class instruction. Currently, very

little research knowledge based on a naturalistic paradigm is available related to using whole class instruction as an alternative to ability grouping.

The following research questions were posed and emerged during this study.

1. To what degree will teachers use whole class instruction as an instructional strategy if it is incorporated in a materials-based first grade reading program?
2. What are some of the concerns, problems and issues associated with using whole class teaching in first grade reading instruction?
3. What are the teachers' perceptions concerning the use of whole class instruction as a classroom instructional strategy (e.g., ease of use, effectiveness, etc.)?
4. What are some of the effects of whole class instruction on first grade students?

Methods

The study was conducted at an elementary school in a middle-class section of Orem, Utah. Two first grade classrooms were studied. The teachers of these two classrooms were female. One teacher had been teaching for five years, the other four years. There was very little difference in class size; one class had 29 and the other 28 students . Prior to this study, the teachers had been using a basal reading series as the primary tool of reading instruction and had their classes organized into three groups based on reading ability. The teachers were selected on the basis of their willingness to use a materials-based reading program which used peer tutoring as an important component of the instructional system, called the Companion Reading Program.

As is typically the case in naturalistic studies, the researcher was the primary instrument. The researcher's background prepared him to be an instrument in this inquiry. He has taken graduate courses in naturalistic inquiry and was the primary researcher in a previous naturalistic study.

The data were collected during the 1987-1988 academic year. Three data collection procedures were used: classroom observations, interviews and document analysis. Teachers, the school principal, and the reading program author were interviewed. Several documents used in the classrooms and the Companion Reading Program itself was referred to during the study.

Field notes summarizing data gathered and analyses made before, during, and after fieldwork were maintained and reviewed on an on-going basis over the study period. Based on the data collection, issues and hypotheses emerged. Negative instances were searched to enable disconfirmation and modification of hypotheses. Some formal analysis

was conducted during the data collection, but most of the analysis occurred after data collection.

Findings

The Degree which whole class instruction was used by the teachers

In naturalistic inquiry conducted on instructional assistance in beginning reading instruction, Duffy and McIntyre (1982) found that the teachers in their study used very little, if any, instructional assistance with their students. They expected to examine and report how teachers use this instructional strategy, but were rather surprised to learn that there was only limited evidence of instructional assistance being used by the teachers. Because they could only find limited evidence of this phenomenon, their research questions related to how such assistance is structured and sequenced became moot.

In light of this research reported by Duffy and McIntyre (1982) and other naturalistic research literature we reviewed, we concluded that one of the first questions to address was to determine the degree to which teachers used whole class instruction in the classroom. Second, we wanted to determine to what degree teachers would follow the procedures specified in the Companion Reading Program (a materials-based reading program which uses whole class instruction as an alternative to ability grouping) for using whole class instruction.

The teachers used whole class instruction everyday as one of the learning activities during the time dedicated for reading instruction. In addition to whole class instruction as a learning activity specified in the Companion Reading Program, teachers also used the following activities: peer tutoring, individual seat work exercises, silent reading and mastery checking. Both teachers averaged about 20 minutes per day for whole class instruction. During this time, teachers would first review previously learned sight words and letter sounds, then they would teach new sight words, letter sounds and reading concepts. Both teachers taught reading during a two hour block from 9:00 am to 11:00 am each morning.

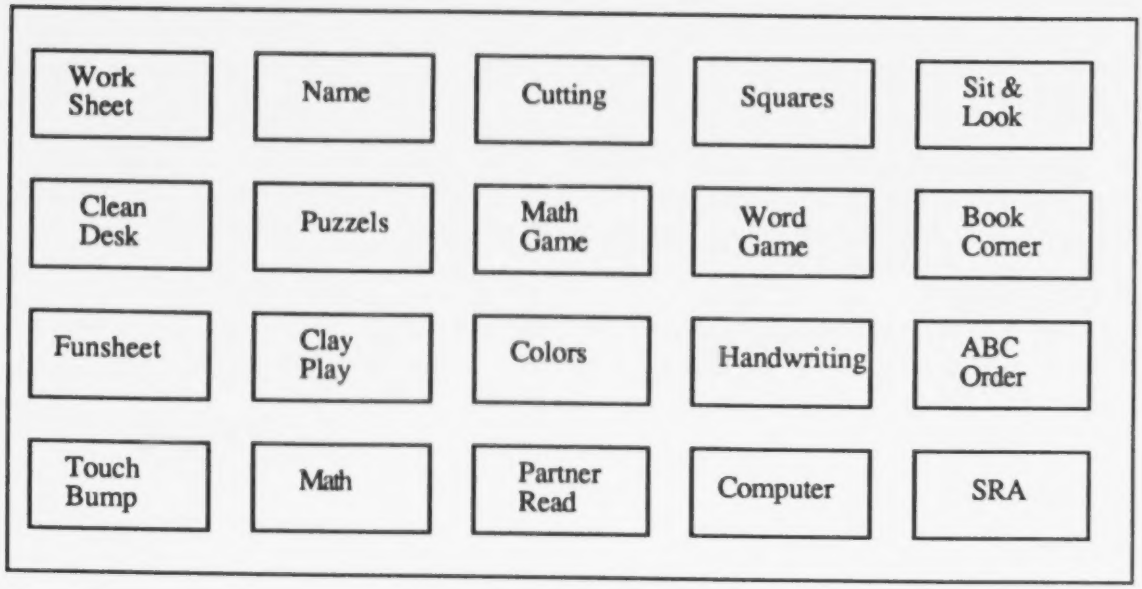
The teachers did not use any ability grouping strategies. We were interested to determine if the teachers might feel a need or desire to group students by ability at some point in their instruction. However, the observation data and interviews with the teachers verified that teachers did not divide the students in groups based on the criterion of ability.

The teachers followed the prescribed procedures rather closely during the first several months of using the program. After Christmas (after about 5 months of using the program), the teachers did make some modifications to the step-by-step instructions in the

teacher's guide. Both teachers followed the scope and sequence of the reading program, but made some minor revisions to the steps prescribed in the teacher's guide. For example, one teacher said she reduced the number of concepts introduced in one unit because it was too much for the children. She said she just skipped these concepts because most of them were second grade concepts and the students did not need to know them.

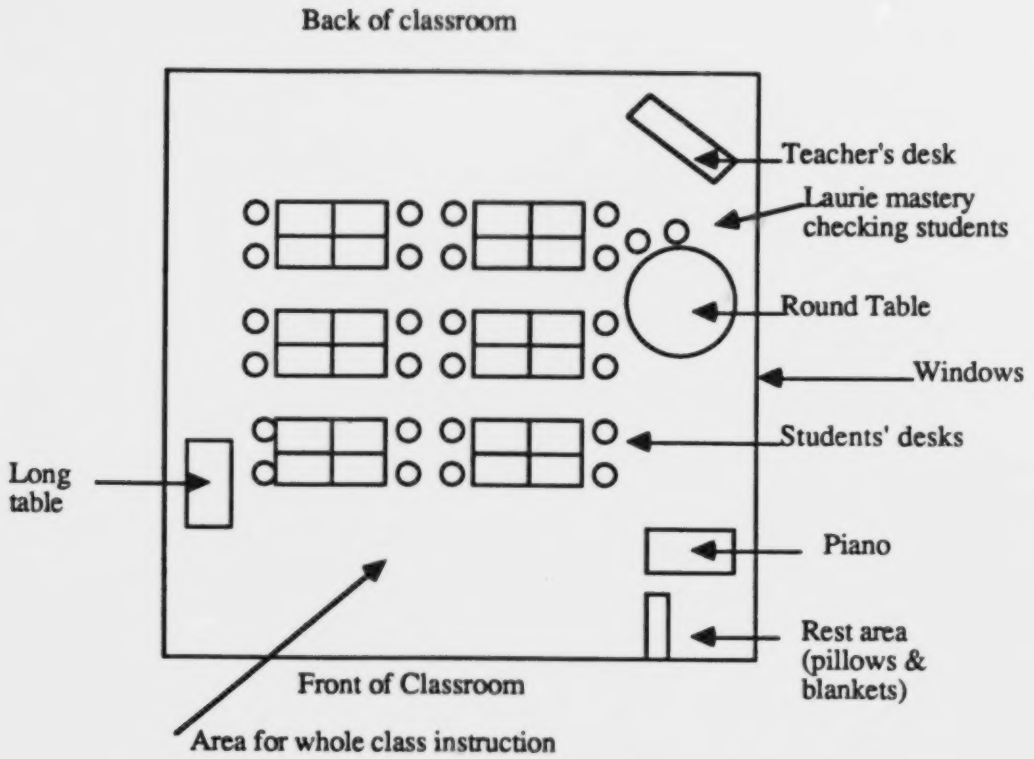
Issues in teaching whole class instruction

Before discussing the issues involved with whole class instruction, we will first examine how the teachers used this strategy as an alternative to ability grouping. Both teachers had all their students sit on the carpet in a group, each student sitting very close to each other. The teacher sat on a chair in front of the group of students as she taught the class. The teachers would almost always begin the class instruction by reading a book to them. The stories in the books would take anywhere from five to 10 minutes. After the story, the teachers would then begin the instruction for that reading period. Both teachers used large poster paper attached to an easel instead of using the blackboard to write words and letters which she would review or teach for that day. After the teachers taught the reading lesson for that day using the step-by-step procedures in the teacher's guide, each teacher would explain how to complete the seat work exercise. Following this explanation, the teachers would review with the class the Workshop priorities. Workshop was a classroom management scheme in which the teacher would list several daily student activities and tasks on a bulletin board in the classroom as the following diagram illustrates.



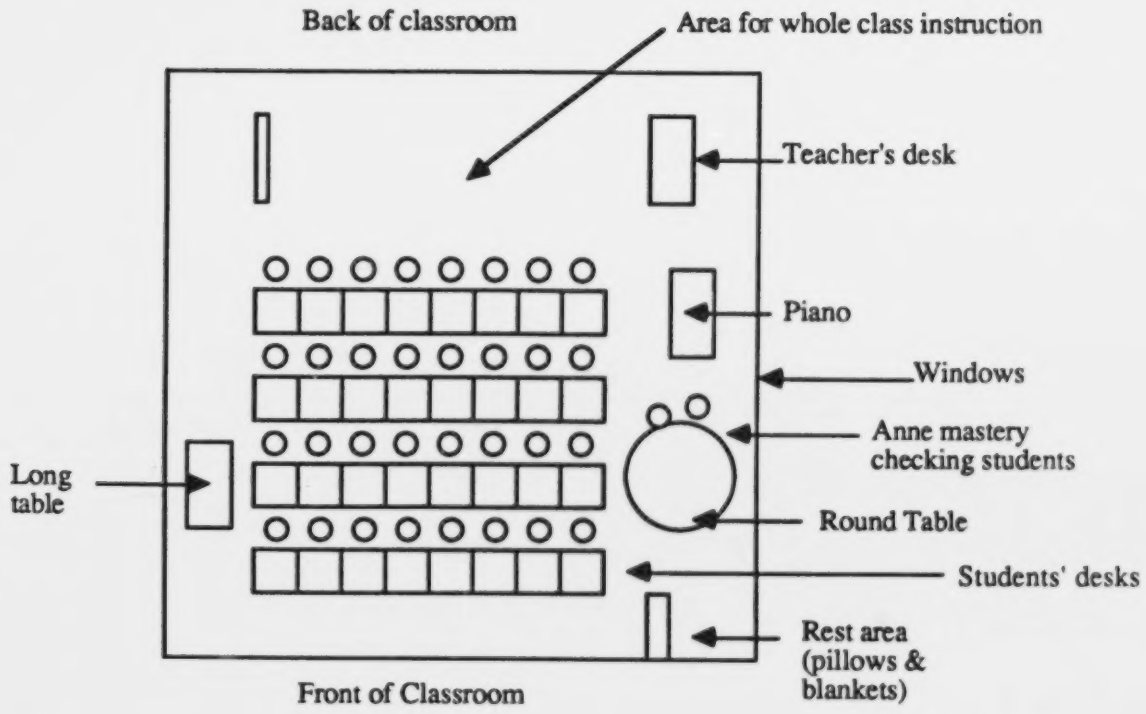
Each day before class started the teachers would prioritize the several of the activities listed on the Workshop bulletin board. They would usually pick six or seven activities and prioritize these activities, putting a number from one to seven on the activity indicated in what order the students were to accomplish each task. Following whole class instruction, the teachers dismissed the students to go back to their seats and work in companionships to complete the companion study exercises. After the companionships completed their companion study exercise, they would look at the Workshop bulletin board to determine what they should do first as they sat at their desk during individual seat work time. Almost always the teachers had the students complete their seat work exercise as the first priority on the Workshop bulletin board.

Laurie (a fictitious name for one of the teachers), managed her classroom with much more control and structure than Anne (a fictitious name for the other teacher participating in this study). Laurie required the students to fold their arms and push in their chairs every time they came to sit on the rug for whole class instruction. Laurie dismissed the class by groups (the groups were established by the how the seats were arranged as shown in the following diagram) to walk to front of the room to sit on the carpet.



The small circles in the preceding diagram represent the individual students. The diagram shows how four students desks comprised a group of students. Laurie spent much or her instructional time in class discipline and trying to keep a standard of expected behavior in the classroom.

Anne on the other hand was much more relaxed in terms of maintaining a standard of behavior like Laurie's classroom. The individual student seats in Anne's classroom were arranged by rows and not by groups, as the following diagram shows.



Anne dismissed the students by rows, but did not require the students to fold their arms as they were walking and to make sure their chairs were pushed under their desks as Laurie required. The noise level in Anne's classroom was significantly higher than in Laurie's classroom. Anne spent much less time calling on individual children to discipline them than Laurie. As a rough estimate, Laurie would usually call on an individual child for discipline purposes about 7-10 times during whole class instruction, whereas Anne would chasten about 3-5 times.

For a more detailed and rich description of teachers using whole class instruction, see Appendix A. Appendix A contains field notes which the primary author wrote while observing Laurie teach a lesson from the Companion Reading program using whole class instruction.

During the study, many issues and concerns were identified by the teachers, from observational data and document analysis of the reading program and other related documents concerning using whole class instruction as an alternative to ability grouping. The following issues and concerns were identified.

- It is very difficult to keep all the students attention when there are so many individual differences in the class, i.e., several advanced students reading at a fourth grade level vs several slow students attending resource. For example, advanced students

seem to become easily distracted when a slower student is responding, causing more discipline problems.

- In teaching the entire class, several students respond to a question out of turn and blurt out the answer before the student called on can respond.
- It is difficult to be aware of students who do not respond during group response and are inattentive.
- It is difficult to get the students to respond in unison when reading a word or a sentence as an entire class.
- Concern that correcting children who are shy and have a low self-esteem in front of the entire class when the respond incorrectly will affect their self-concept.
- It is very difficult to accommodate individual differences with such a large group of children.

Teachers' perceptions of using whole class instruction as an alternative to ability grouping

Teachers' perceptions about using whole class instruction as an alternative to ability grouping were generally very positive. Teachers said they prefer using whole class instruction over ability groups.

In terms of ease of use of whole class instruction vs. ability grouping, teachers indicated that whole class instruction was much easier to prepare and teach than small groups. Instead of having to prepare three or more lessons each day (as is the case with ability grouping), teachers only had to prepare and teach one lesson each day with whole class instruction. The teachers often referred to the step-by-step instructions from the Companion Reading teacher's guide as they taught the class (teachers would usually have the lesson for that day on the clipboard and refer to the clipboard periodically as they taught the lesson).

In relation to the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of whole class instruction as an instructional strategy, they felt this strategy was very effective in achieving the desired learning outcomes for students. Before they used whole class instruction, teachers were skeptical that the higher and lower students would be penalized by teaching the class in one group. However, after using this strategy, they were convinced that the high ability and low ability students did not suffer any negative effects.

Effects of whole class instruction on students

In relation to the teachers' perceptions of the effects of whole class instruction on student achievement, they felt that their students this year had learned many more concepts and were better readers as a whole than the students last year. However, teachers were quick to acknowledge that the instructional materials they were using this year (Companion Reading Program) introduced many more concepts and sight words than the basal reading program they used last year. In addition, the Companion Reading Program also included many other instructional variables (such as peer tutoring, parental involvement, consistent mastery checking, etc.) which probably had an influence on student achievement in addition to whole class instruction. Teachers did say that an obvious effect of using the Companion Reading Program (which uses whole class instruction) was that students had a high degree of confidence in their ability to read, even the lower ability students. Teachers said that they really liked not having to place students into ability groups. They expressed concern that placing students into ability groups really had a negative effect on the low ability students. The teachers felt the students this year did much better in reading than the students they had last year, even though the first grade students last year were as a group more advanced than this year's first grade students. These perceptions were also supported by the principal of the school.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results from this study indicate that in the context, setting and time of this case study, whole class instruction is a viable alternative to ability grouping. The teachers and the principal stated that they prefer whole class instruction over ability grouping. They felt the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages in using this instructional strategy. In addition, from the perceptions of the educators at this school, whole class instruction was a very positive factor in the achievement of the students.

The following are recommendations in dealing with the issues and concerns identified in the finding section. These recommendations came from document analysis, reflective comments from teacher interview on how they could improve their instruction, and observational data. Following each concern or issue (which is preceded by a bullet "•", are recommendations concerning how to deal with that concern or issue.

- It is very difficult to keep all the students attention when there are so many individual differences in the class, i.e., several advanced students reading at a fourth grade

level vs several slow students attending resource. For example, advanced students seem to become easily distracted when a slower student is responding.

Have the more advanced students come to the board and respond in a specified way when first introducing a concept. For example, you could assign a student to identify words that involve specific phonic rules such as the silent "e" or double vowel.

For first grade students, try to never spend longer than 30 minutes in whole class instruction. Ideally, you should devote 15-20 minutes for instruction. If you need to teach a new concept which takes more than 30 minutes, break up the instruction so that you do not extend over 30 minutes in one setting. Keep discussions regarding new concepts brief and to the point.

Having the children sit on the carpet in front of the teacher may have cause more harm that good. Children become very restless having to sit cross-legged after so long with a backrest.

- In teaching the entire class, it is difficult to control when several students respond to a question out of turn and blurt out the answer before the student called on can respond.

You should clarify and consistently remind the students that you expect them to not respond individually unless you call on them. Otherwise, much of the value of whole class instruction will be lost if you allow students to give answers without being called on.

- It is difficult to be aware of students who do not respond during group response and are inattentive.

If you find students becoming inattentive during Whole Class Instruction, it may be indicative of one of two things: (1) your instructional pace is too slow, or (2) you have not been firm enough in terms of your expectation that they are attentive during group instruction. The value of group instruction will diminish if the students are not attentive. Obviously there is no value in a student repeating the sight word "the" in a choral response if they are not looking at the word "the." It is absolutely essential that you never become lax as far as the expectation that all of the students are attentive during Whole Class Instruction and that all of the students respond when you stipulate a group response. Children who are easily distracted should be assigned seats at the front of the class.

When you see a student during whole class instruction that is inattentive, remind the student, by name, that you expect him or her to respond with the rest of the class.

Make it a practice to point to the word before you designate who you want to respond, this will result in all of the students being attentive up to the point that you designate the student by name to respond.

- It is difficult to get the students to respond in unison when reading a word or a sentence as an entire class.

Specify the hand signals you want the students to follow when you have them respond as a class. When a new task is introduced, clarify how you want them to respond.

Set a fast pace, especially when you have the students respond as a class or have individual students read words.

- Concern that correcting children who are shy and have a low self-esteem in front of the entire class when the respond incorrectly will affect their self-concept.

If a child responds incorrectly, or does not respond within three or four seconds, refrain from saying "no." Simply tell the child the answer and have him or her repeat it. Praise the child for repeating the word.

- It is very difficult to accommodate individual differences with such a large group of children.

During Whole Class Instruction you can accommodate individual differences by the responses you elicit from individual students; how much you have them respond; when you have them respond; who you ask to respond.

For example, during the first lesson of a unit, you would call on the better readers to respond individually during whole class instruction. Then during the last lessons of the unit, you could call on other students to review words or letters and have the more advanced students respond to more advanced words or reading.

Teachers have many opportunities to accommodate individual differences during whole class instruction. The fact that the entire class is being instructed at the same time in no way limits the teacher's opportunity to accommodate individual differences.

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Appendix A
Typical Day of Whole Class Instruction

9:12 am. When I walked in, Laurie was reading a book to the students. The students were on the rug in front of her like they usually are for reading, but today something was different. It took me just a minute to figure out that the seating arrangement was different. It would have been interesting to come a little earlier and find out how Laurie organizes the students into rows to sit on the floor. I will ask her that question in my next interview with her.

I didn't think to record the name of the book after Laurie finished reading it. It seemed like a longer and more detailed book than the other books I have heard her read in the past. The book gave little story of animals and different things and then asked a question usually at the end of each of the stories. For example, there were five camels going to get a drink of water, but one camel decided to take a different trail to another water hole. How many camels drank at the first water hole?

Laurie would call on individuals who were ready to be called on (quite and arms folded properly) to answer each of the little scenarios in the book. Laurie would also ask for group participation at the end of little story that asked a question, for example, Laurie would say, "Everyone that thinks there were two nuts left, touch your nose." The kids really get into making a game out of answering questions like that. When Laurie was calling on individuals to answer the questions, some of the children were not paying attention to the story or what seemed to be going on in the class. But when she would get the whole class involved, everyone seemed to pay attention and get into the game. Some kids, however, were very attentive when Laurie was calling on individuals to answer the questions and raised their hands almost every time she asked a question.

Another thing Laurie would do when she asked individuals to answer the questions was to ask a student a question and then ask another student if the student who answered was right or wrong. For example, Laurie would choose Nancy to answer the question in the book, then say, "Was Nancy right, David G.?" Then David G. would say that she was right.

Mrs. Pearson's door was open when I first came in Laurie's class. Usually she always has her door shut. I noticed by looking into her class that it was very noisy and students were running all around the room. Much noise coming from her classroom. I heard her class start singing a song together about five minutes after I arrived. After they sang the song, the class repeated the National Anthem. After this one of the students in her class closed the door.

There was also a lady who had two children outside Mrs. Pearson's class in the hallway between Mrs. Pearson's's and Laurie's classroom. One of the children looked about first grade age, the other was quite a bit younger, maybe about 3 or 4 years old. This lady walked in and out of Mrs. Pearson's's class a couple of times, as well as the children.

Laurie has changed the room decorations since I've been in the room last. She has taken down all the students house that they made with their names, addresses and phone numbers which were hanging down from the ceiling. In place of these, she has put Halloween decorations. She also took down the students self-portraits which were on the outside of the door to the classroom and replaced them with Halloween decorations. She also took down the Grade A+ board and it is now blank with nothing on it. But in between the Workshop board and the Grade A+ board she now has display on the board with two ghosts that says the following (Boooooo....., just reminding you to have a happy and safe Halloween).

9:20 am. From what Laurie said to the class, apparently Laurie had a substitute come in during the morning yesterday as Laurie had a meeting with the principal.

Laurie now used the chart on the moveable chalkboard and individual students read the sight words on the first line. The Chart had the following words, letters and sentences written on it:

I the is not this Is

n a s f m th i r

This is Sam.
Sam is a man.
Sam is in math.
Sis is not a man.
Sis is not in math.
Is Sam in math?
Is Sis in math?

Laurie had about one student repeat say each word. She called on the students who had their hands raised.

Then she had all the girls say each of the sight words together. Then she had the girls say all the letter sounds together as a group, but just girls. Then Laurie had the boys repeat some of the sight words and some of the letter sounds together. Before the boys went, she said something to the effect to lets see if the boys can say the words louder and better than the girls did. The boys said the words and letter sounds much louder and distinct than the girls did. After the boys finished, Laurie told the boys they did very well, but one of the reasons they did so well was that the girls went first and so the boys knew how loud to go to beat them. She said next time she will let the boys go first and determine who wins.

Laurie then played a little game with the children. I think that she played this game with them once before because she said last time they played this she won the game. She also didn't give them any instructions, they seemed to know just what to do, so they had played the game before. The game consisted of the following. When Laurie would touch the letter on the chart, the students were suppose to sustain the letter sound until she took her finger off the chart. If all the class quit saying the sound when she took off her finger at the same time as group, then the students got the point. However, if Laurie took off her finger and a student wasn't watching or sustained the sound longer than the group, then Laurie got the point. Laurie played the game for about 7 times. She counted up the points at first, then had the students keep track of the score. At the end, Laurie asked the class who won the game and what was the final score. Lynn was called on and said that the teacher won the game and gave the score.

9:25 am. Now Laurie is having each student in a row either say a sight word or a letter sound. For example, she would call on Bruce's row, and start with Bruce. She would point to a sight word or letter sound and Bruce would be the first one to say the word or sound, then child next to Bruce responded and so on through each of the students in the row. After all the students in the row had a turn to give a response, Laurie would ask the class if the row deserved a check (√-), a check (√), or a check plus (√+). If all the students said the right word or gave the correct letter sound, then Laurie would give the row a √+, but if one student made a mistake, then she would give the row a √. All but one of the rows got a √+. The row that didn't got a √+ because one of the students did not get one of the sight words right.

9:29 am. Laurie is now having individual students read the sentences on the board. Laurie uses a large marker (a piece of poster board about three inches wide and about 18 inches long) to put under each of the sentences. I assume the purpose of this is so the students know which sentence they are suppose to be reading.

As Laurie calls on individual students to read the sentences, I begin to wonder again how she selects the students to respond. A couple of times during the session, she says, "David G. looks like he is ready to read a sentence because he is sitting quitely with his hand up." It seems like she is calling on students who are behaving properly as she has

asked them to instead of students who ought to have a chance to participate to increase their self-esteem who Laurie knows can answer read the sentence correctly.

After she has one student read each sentence, she tells the students to think what the sentences really mean.

One thing I noticed is that Laurie cognitive models. That is, she talks outloud what she is thinking. I don't know whether she does this consciously or not, but she thinks outloud as she is doing a task. For example, as she started to read the sentences on the chart, she went through somewhat of a dialogue as the following, "Now let's see, how did I put this chart up the other day so that everyone could see it? Oh yes, I put it over the chalkboard, didn't I? I couldn't remember for a minute there just what I had done before to make it work. But now I can remember, I put it over the chalkboard so everyone could see it." Well, her little dialogue went something like that. I notice that Laurie has call on individuals quite regularly because they are not behaving properly.

Laurie went through each of the sentences and explained what they meant. She used volunteers to illustrate on some of the sentences. For example, on the first sentence, she had David G. stand up and she used him to illustrate what the first sentence meant. As David stood in front of the class, she told the students to pretend that David G. was a new student in the school and that his name was really Sam instead of David G. Then Laurie explained that if Sam where a new member of the class, that Laurie would say to the class as she would introduce him, "This is Sam." Laurie had David G. and Stacy stand up for the next sentence "Sam is a man." Laurie asked the class which one was a man, Stacy or Sam. All the class said Sam was a man, which she then went back to the sentence and said the sentence again, "Sam is a man." Laurie went through the next two sentence like that, using volunteers to illustrate the meaning of the sentence. On the sentence with the red line underneath it "Sis is not in math", Laurie asked the class why do they think this sentence has a red line under it. She told the class that the reason this sentence was underlined was so because the next two questions relate to this sentence. (Reflections-I think as Laurie said this, she realized that only one of the questions really related to this sentence and that she might have made a mistake, but I really don't know because she didn't say anything about it and just went on with the instruction) She had Nancy read the first question, "Is Sam in math?" Laurie asked Nancy, what does this sentence mean? Laurie also reminded Nancy to use expression asking a question (tonality so you know it is a question). Laurie helped the class answer the question by going back to the sentence above and using that sentence to answer the question. Laurie had Randy read the second question. Neither of the girls had any problem reading the question. Laurie explained to the class that sometimes they will answer questions using the information given to them in the previous sentences, as in this example.

Laurie again reminded the class that she was going to call on students who are quite and ready to answer.

Laurie explained the Companion Study Exercise #14 for today. She said that it would be a little different than normal. She explained that today there is a separate sheet for the first learner and the second learner. In the past you have always shared the same sheet, but today you will have different sheets.

About this time the girls (mentioned earlier that were with a lady in the halls) outside were making very much noise. Laurie asked Staton to go shut the door.

Laurie finished explaining the Companion Study exercise. She explained that they will be answering questions at the end of the exercise, referring back to the sentences they just read above the questions.

David G. asked why there are two sheets that say Exercise #14 on them. Laurie explained to him that they (the authors of the Companion Reading) wanted to make you think by answering different questions than the first learner, so they came up with two different exercises with different questions. She showed that the sight words and letter sounds are the same, but the sentences and questions are different between the first student and second student form.